

CLAIMS

1. A method of assessing an encoded signal to determine whether a candidate format was used to arrange the signal into blocks before the encoding was done, the method comprising: using the Viterbi algorithm to determine trellis metrics for a point in said signal that would be an end point of a candidate block according to the candidate format; determining from said metrics the likelihood of occupation at said point of an end state of an encoding scheme used to create the encoded signal; decoding a part of said signal ending at said point; and performing a check using said decoded part to determine whether the candidate block satisfies an error protection scheme of the candidate format.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of determining the likelihood of occupation of the end state comprises comparing the metrics at the end point.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the step of determining the likelihood of occupation of the end state comprises comparing the maximum metric at the end point with the end state metric at the end point.
4. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the likelihood of occupation obtained from said metrics is used to determine whether said checking step is to be performed.
5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the likelihood of occupation obtained from said metrics is used to determine whether said decoding step is to be performed.
6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the candidate format specifies that the candidate block has a data part and a checksum part and the checking step comprises generating a corroborative checksum from a part of the candidate block that would be data according to the candidate format and comparing the corroborative checksum with the said checksum part.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein said decoded part contains said data part of the candidate block.
8. A method according to claim 6, wherein said decoded part contains a section only of said data part of the candidate block and the corroborative checksum is generated from said section using an intermediate checksum value as a starting point.
9. Apparatus for assessing an encoded signal to determine whether a candidate format was used to arrange the signal into blocks before the encoding was done, the apparatus comprising: calculating means applying the Viterbi algorithm to determine trellis metrics for a point in said signal that would be an end point of a candidate block according to the candidate format; assessing means for determining from said metrics the likelihood of occupation at said point of an end state of an encoding scheme used to create the encoded signal; decoding means for decoding a part of said signal ending at said point; and checking means for performing a check using said decoded part to determine whether the candidate block satisfies an error protection scheme of the candidate format.
10. Apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the assessing means is arranged to determine the likelihood of occupation of the end state by comparing metrics at the end point.
11. Apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the assessing means is arranged to determine the likelihood of occupation of the end state by comparing the maximum metric at the end point with the end state metric at the end point.
12. Apparatus according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the likelihood of occupation obtained from said metrics is used to determine whether said check is to be performed.
13. Apparatus according to any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein the likelihood of occupation obtained from said metrics is used to determine whether the decoding is to be performed by the decoding means.

14. Apparatus according to any one of claims 9 to 13, wherein the candidate format specifies that the candidate block has a data part and a checksum part and the checking means is arranged to generate a corroborative checksum from a part of the candidate block that would be data according to the candidate format and compare the corroborative checksum with said checksum part.
15. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said decoded part contains said data part of the candidate block.
16. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said decoded part contains a section only of said data part of the candidate block and the checking means is arranged to generate the corroborative checksum from said section using an intermediate checksum value as a starting point.
17. A program for causing data processing apparatus to perform the method of any one of claims 1 to 8.
18. Apparatus for assessing an encoded signal to determine whether a candidate format was used to arrange the signal into blocks before the encoding was done, the apparatus being substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 2 or 3.
19. A method of assessing an encoded signal to determine whether a candidate format was used to arrange the signal into blocks before the encoding was done, the method being substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figure 2 or 3.